



# Saguaro National Park (West)

## Naturalist Program Schedule

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Programs meet at the Red Hills Visitor Center, 2700 N. Kinney Road, and last 30 to 45 minutes, unless noted otherwise. Program schedules are subject to change. Call the visitor center at (520) 733-5158 for updates. See [www.nps.gov/sagu](http://www.nps.gov/sagu) for other programs.

**Dec. 1, 8, 15, 22, 29**                      **2:15 p.m.**      **Those Who Came Before**    *Talk: 45 min.*  
Learn about the Hohokam ("those who are gone"), who inhabited this area from A.D. 300 to A.D. 1450. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**                      **2:15 p.m.**      **Geology: the Tucson Mountains**    *Talk: 45 min.*  
This program explores how the Tucson Mountains came to be where they are now, their composition and forces that built and continue to shape them. *Wheelchair accessible*

**Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**                      **3:15 p.m.**      **Signs of Life**    *Walk: 35 min, ½ mile*  
Enjoy an easy walk around the Red Hills Visitors' Center to look for evidence of animal life.

**Dec. 3, 10**                                      **10:15 a.m.**      **Thirsty Mammals**    *Hike: ¾ mile, 1 hr.*  
Sonoran Desert mammals are seldom seen, but they are present in great diversity and numbers. Where are they? How do they survive in the desert climate? Come along to learn the answers.

**Dec. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31**                      **2:15 p.m.**      **The CCC in Saguaro National Park**    *Talk: 45 min.*    The Civilian Conservation Corps was a Depression-era work program that had a great influence on national, state, and county parks. Saguaro's trails, picnic areas, and scenic drives were established during this program. A brief history of the CCC in this area will be illustrated with old photo images and movie clips. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**Dec. 3, 10, 17, 31**                              **3:15 p.m.**      **Synergy in the Desert**    *Talk: 45 min.*  
For all of life, "the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" is true. The iconic Saguaro is the focal point for a discussion of how the parts of the Sonoran Desert work together to create a rich living desert that is unique in the world. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**Dec. 4, 5, 19, 26**                              **1:15 p.m.**      **Don't Forget to Turn Off the Lights**    *Talk: 45 min.*  
Birds crash into buildings; some animals stop mating. Stars disappear from view. Learn what the National Park Service is doing about light pollution – and how YOU can help flip the switch to save the night skies. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**Dec. 4**    **3:00 p.m.**      **Ironwood Forest National Monument**    *Talk 45 min.*    West of Saguaro National Park is a beautiful piece of the Sonoran Desert protected by the Bureau of Land Management. Join *Guest Speaker Laura Thompson-Olais* to learn how to get there, what to do there, how to get more information, and about volunteer opportunities with the BLM.

**Dec. 4, 5, 19, 26**                              **9:45 a.m.**      **Neighborhood Characters**    *Talk: 45 min.*  
An easy morning walk in the Cactus Garden will bring you face to thorns with plants that may remind you of people you know, friendly and otherwise. *Wheelchair accessible.*

**Dec. 4, 11, 18**                                      **11:45 a.m.**      **Packrats**    *Hike: 45 min., ½ mile*  
Walk up a wash and search for a packrat home. They tell us about changes in climate, human history, & geology as well as about the inhabitants.

- Dec. 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27**      **11:45 a.m. Snakes** *Talk: 45 min.*  
Learn about the communication skills, special adaptations and defense systems of these often misunderstood creatures. A bit of folk lore is also shared. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- Dec. 5, 6, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27**      **2:15 p.m. Homesteaders** *Talk: 45 min.*  
Enjoy the fascinating oral history surrounding Mexican American Homesteaders' adventures around Saguaro National Park communities. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- Dec. 6, 13**      **10:45 a.m. Birdless Bird Walk** *Walk: 30 min, 100 yards*  
Have you heard a bird call you didn't recognize? Have you seen a bird new to you and wonder what it is? Even if no real birds actually grace us with their presence, we'll show you what the common birds look and sound like. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- Dec. 7, 21**      **11:45 a.m. God's Dog & Desert "Pigs"** *Talk: 30 min.*  
An introduction to two of our most common desert mammals: the coyote and the javelina. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- Dec. 7, 21**      **10:45 a.m. They are Mining our National Park?** *Talk: 45 min.* No, but they did before it became a National Park. If you are interested in the mining in this region and other local history, join us for this program. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- Dec. 7, 21, 28**      **2:15 p.m. Meet the Cuckoo of the Desert** *Talk: 45 min.*  
Learn about the natural history, behavior and other fascinating facts about this colorful creature: the roadrunner. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- Dec. 14, 28**      **10:45 a.m. Adaptations: Recipe for Survival** *Walk: 45 min., 100 yds.*  
Take a walk in our Cactus Garden to discover some physical and behavioral adaptations of desert plants. *Wheelchair accessible*
- Dec. 14, 28**      **11:45 a.m. Life Cycle of the Saguaro: Seed to Giant** *Talk: 45 min.* Some astonishing reasons given about why so few saguaro seeds make it to fruition. *Wheelchair Accessible.*
- Dec. 17, 24, 31**      **10:45 a.m. Tarantula** *Talk: 45 min.*  
They look big, hairy, and scary, but they're really just big (8 legged) pussycats! Come meet a live tarantula and learn more about this fascinating desert creature. *Wheelchair accessible.*
- Dec. 22, 27, 28, 29**      **3:15 p.m. Life on the Edge: Plant and Animal Survival Strategies** *Walk: 100 yards.* Adaptations to seemingly harsh conditions allow many species to survive and even flourish, but will desert plants and animals be able to weather climate changes?
- Dec. 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31**      **9:45 a.m. Lost and Gone Forever** *Hike: 2 hrs., 1 ½ miles*  
Learn how species become threatened, endangered or extinct. What are the consequences of habitat loss or climate change to those that call this place home?
- Dec. 17**      **4:00 p.m. Twilight Glow To Moon Shadows** *Hike: 2½ hrs., 2½ mi.*  
This easy, stroll bridges sunset and darkness, letting hikers experience the desert both in the twilight glow and in moon shadows. **Reservations required; 733-5158**
- Dec. 18**      **3:15 p.m. Sunset Hike** *Hike: 3½ hrs. 3½ miles*  
The route gains 700 feet (with some switchbacks) before reaching a ridgeline for sunset; the descent is by the light of the moon. **Reservations required; 733-5158**

**Dec. 19**                      **4:00 p.m.**                      **Moon Take Night Make Day Hike:** 3 hrs. 2½ miles. Hike up a gentle, relatively flat desert wash during the transition from day to night, enjoy the sunset atop a hill, and then return under the moonlight. **Reservations required; 733-5158**

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**Dec. 21** **6:30 p.m.** **Moonrise Over the Mountains** *Talk: 45 min.*  
Relax around a campfire on the visitor center patio as the full moon rises above the cactus forest. Bring a lawn chair and warm clothing. No reservations required. *Wheelchair accessible.*

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**Visitor Center**  
**The Red Hills Visitor Center** is open daily from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, except Christmas Day. A slide show is shown every half-hour.

For more information about Saguaro National Park and some of its partners, Friends of Saguaro National Park, Western National Parks Association, and the Rincon Institute, visit these websites:

[www.wnpa.org](http://www.wnpa.org)

[www.rinconinstitute.org](http://www.rinconinstitute.org)